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E.O. 12958: 10/26/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA'S PM FICO MYSTERIOUSLY ILL

CLASSIFIED BY: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Slovakia's 42-yr-old Prime Minister Robert Fico is ailing physically, but it's unclear how serious his illness is. Fico has skipped the weekly Wednesday night hockey game with the Ambassador and others for several weeks. On Thursday October 26, Fico told the Ambassador that he was receiving daily treatment for three hours in the mornings, but did not reveal the cause of his illness. He looked tired and was unshaven, telling the Ambassador that he was growing a beard. Later that day, Fico cancelled all public events through Saturday. His spokesperson announced that he suffered from backbone pains and exhaustion but that he was not seeing a doctor and should be back to his normal routine next week. Privately, an MFA contact noted that Fico has problems with high blood pressure. Fico has refused to respond to media inquiries about his health, stating "My health is my private business." (COMMENT: PM Fico, even more than his predecessor, has concentrated decision-making authority in his own office. Those responsibilities, together with riding herd over coalition partners Slota and Meciar, would exhaust even the healthiest person. END COMMENT.)

¶2. (C) Fico has found the time for some public political comments, however. On October 27, he accused the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) of using "dirty tricks" from morning till night, referencing an on-going scandal in the Ministry of Agriculture and the possible attack on an ethnic Hungarian university student in August.

VALLEE